(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) At the behest of the State Government, AAI has been directed by the Central Government to continue the existing arrangement for cargo operation at Trivandrum Airport.

Baljek Airport

328. SHRI THOMAS SANGMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) by when the major works relating to Baljek (Tura) Airport would be completed;

(b) the reasons for the delay; and

(c) by when the airport is likely to be commissioned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Airports Authority of India has completed all the development works of Baljek Airport. The airport is planned to be commissioned in November, 2008.

Training of pilots abroad

329. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated shortage of trained pilots in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that some pilots have been sent to different training schools in the USA and other countries for training;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the actual cost of training in the USA and other countries;

(d) whether India does not have quality training schools to train pilots; and

(e) if so, the steps taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There is a shortage of aircraft type endorsed pilots, particularly in the commander category. The estimated shortage is 900.

(b) No, Sir. Government does not send pilots for training abroad.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. India has quality flying training schools to train pilots. Some of the training schools are provided with necessary assistance by way of providing trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation/Aero Club of India. Facilities and Training infrastructure at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) have been upgraded and modernized to enhance its training capacity and to make it a world-class institute. In order to further augment the flying training facilities in the country it has been decided to establish a world-class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra.